



Dianella admixta

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY
SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE REGION INC.

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NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2023


Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, February to December except November. **Visitors are always very welcome**

The venue is the Hughesdale Community Hall, Cnr Poath and Kangaroo Roads, Hughesdale (MEL 69 C7)

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Please forward any newsletter contributions, comments or photos to Marj at 36 Voumard Street, Oakleigh South 3167 or to the email address above.

*******DEADLINE FOR THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER IS 21st NOVEMBER*******

<u>Next Meeting</u>	<u>CONTENTS</u>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>NOVEMBER OUTING:</u></p> <p>We will meet at the Chelsea Garden in Olinda at 11am – at the site of the old Olinda golf Course, 24 Georgian Road, Olinda. (Mel: 66 J7). Depending on the weather, wear comfy shoes, bring a hat and water. Car pooling is recommended.</p>  <p>We then have a booking for lunch at Dudley’s restaurant, 12:30pm 540 Mount Dandenong Tourist Rd, Olinda VIC 3788</p>	<p>Page 1: November outing</p> <p>Page 2: Book Sale Rainfall</p> <p>Pages 2,3: October meeting</p> <p>Page 3: Events diary Promotions</p> <p>Pages 4,5: Spotted Gum</p> <p>Pages 6,7,8: Photo Gallery</p>

BOOK SALE

The December meeting will be your last opportunity to pick up remaining books from our library sell-off for a gold coin, after which they will be disposed of.

RAINFALL FOR 2023 (mm)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Oakleigh South	15.1	36.8	47.6	99.1	119.2	73.7	28.8	37					457.3
Highett	10.7	27.5	49.2	80	82	54.2	20.7	23.2					347.9
Hampton	10.15	23.34	31.46	98.75									163.70
Cranbourne South	7	29	49	79	95	84	40	40	45				468
Elsternwick	10	23	37.5	100	91	54	23						338.5
Ashburton	25.7	29.7	53.2	100.0	92.2								

OCTOBER MEETING:

Speaker: Peter Rogers

Topic: The Stirling Ranges, WA

Peter gave a most engaging and informative talk on The Stirling Ranges, Western Australia, a region that he has visited on several occasions over the years, including a recent visit during September.

Peter is an avid field naturalist and Australian plant enthusiast. He is a long-time member of the Maroondah APS (currently their President) and Ringwood Field Naturalists groups. He also has a keen interest in birds.

The Stirling Ranges (Koi Kyeuunu-ruff) are the only major mountain range in southern Western Australia spanning 1,159km² and located approximately 337 kilometres south east of Perth. This region was gazetted a national park in 1913. By comparison, The Grampians National Park occupies an area of 1,677km².

Considered a biodiversity hotspot, there are currently 1,500 recorded plant species within the Stirling Ranges National Park, including 87 endemic species that are found nowhere else. Orchids are well represented with approximately 75 species spread throughout the park. Despite the low soil fertility this important area provides an important refuge for an outstanding diversity of Australian native plants and animals.

Low nutrient soils support five major vegetation communities: shrubland, mallee-heathland at higher altitudes, woodland, wetland and salt-lake communities on lower slopes and plains.

The park has been identified as an important bird area (IBA) supporting populations of various endangered species including the long and short-billed black cockatoos, western whipbirds, red-capped parrots and western spinebills.

In recent years, several fires have caused significant regrowth which was clearly evident on Peter's recent visit. Peter showed us some slide comparisons of vegetation before and after these fires. Another observation was the impact of climate change on timing of flowering with various plant species including orchids. Some flowered earlier than usual, others were delayed. During a spring visit in 2015, Peter noted many orchid species in flower, however, during his recent visit orchid flowering was sparse, most likely due to lower rainfall.

One most notable geographic feature is Bluff Knoll, the tallest peak for 1,000 km or more in any direction at 1,099m (3,606 ft). Access within the park is restricted to main roads to limit damage to the surrounding flora and fauna. Despite this, there is an abundance of plant species to be seen along these roadsides.

3.

Peter presented many slide photos of plant and bird sightings from his recent visit that included several spider orchid species (*Caladenia arrecta & polychroma*), *Banksias (gardneri, repens)*, *Dryandra (nivea & formosa)*, *Stylidium (speciosa, repens)*, *Drosera menziesii*, pea species (including *Chorizema obtusifolium*, *daviesia* species), *Isopogon baxteri*, *Grevillea fasciculata* and *Kunzea recurva*. Many of these species are endemic to south-west of Western Australia with others only found within the park. Of particular note is *Acacia saligna* which is endemic to WA but is considered a weed in certain areas of Eastern Australia.

Species endemic to The Stirling Ranges include *Chamelaucium ciliatum* (Stirling Wax Flower), *Beaufortia cyrtodonta* (Stirling Range Bottlebrush), *Darwinia "Mountain Bells"* which is a subgroup of the *Darwinia* species, *Banksia solandri* (Stirling Range Banksia), *Hakea ambigua* and *Acacia awestoniana* (Stirling Range Wattle). This acacia species is critically endangered with only 1,000 plants remaining and has been fenced off to protect and enable regeneration. Encouragingly, there are now another 12 plants growing on the other side of the fence. Another rare plant endemic to this area is the small Spider Orchid (*Caladenia bryceana*) with only about 900 plants remaining.

Peter concluded his talk by reiterating the incredible biodiversity of the Stirling Ranges region with considerable scope for several plant species to be grown more widely in cultivation. He encouraged everyone to visit this unique and special place.

EVENTS DIARY

APS South East Melbourne

November 18th Visit to Philip Johnson's Chelsea Garden in Olinda. Meet at 11am at the garden (old Olinda Golf Course, 24 Georgian Road, Olinda **(Mel 66, J7)**). Lunch afterwards at Dudley's in Olinda.

December 5th Christmas Break-up. Members' Slides, plants for sale (gold coin). Last of our book sales.

APS Victoria

2023

18 Nov - COMM and AGM

2024

20 April - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale

14 & 15 September – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo

30 Sept – 4 Oct – ANPSA Biennial conference in Melbourne hosted by APS Vic

PROMOTIONS



Held at the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre, the conference topics include Gardens for Wildlife and Habitat, Restoration and Revegetation of Wetlands, Grasslands and Verges, Care for the Rare, Insects and Biodiversity, Garden Design, Indigenous Food Plants and many more.

Tours before and after will go to Victoria's best wildflower areas and day excursions will feature new botanic gardens, private gardens and wild areas.

Register your interest through the APS Vic website: <https://apsvic.org.au>



The humble spotted gum is a world class urban tree. Here's why

Author : Gregory Moore

Senior Research Associate, School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, The University of Melbourne

An article reprinted from The Conversation under common licence

Most of us find it very difficult to identify different species of eucalypt. You often hear people say they all look the same. Of course, they don't. There are over 700 species of the iconic tree genus, and they can be very different in form, height, flowers and colours. With all this variety, it's nice to have a few species we can identify from metres away, just from looking at the colours and patterns of the bark on the trunk. The spotted gum is one of these instantly recognisable eucalypts.

You may well have seen a spotted gum growing happily on an urban street. These smooth-barked eucalypts have been planted up and down many suburban streets. In fact, if the spotted gum has a secret superpower, it would be the ability to fit into our cities with a minimum of fuss. They're big trees, and produce vast quantities of blossoms, attracting nectar-eaters like rainbow lorikeets in droves. They grow easily, grow straight and grow tall. Spotted gums make great city trees.

Why are spotted gums special?

Spotted gum used to be called *Eucalyptus maculata*. Now it's officially *Corymbia maculata* after a name change about 25 years ago. Some people still debate this. It was probably the trunk and bark of these trees which first caught your eye. These trees replace their bark seasonally, but not all at once. Instead, bits of the bark are shed and new bark grows at different rates. That leaves the famous spots on their trunks (maculatus is Latin for spotted). Early in the growing season some of these spots can be a bright green before fading to tans and greys over the coming months. Many patterns can be stunningly beautiful.

These trees are loved by many. But there are sceptics. Some feel the trees can be a nuisance, and even dangerous because of the bark and branches they shed. There is [some truth](#) to it, as they can drop branches during droughts. Interestingly, these hardwood trees are actually considered [fire resistant](#).

There are very good reasons our city planners and councils turn to the spotted gum. Their wonderfully straight, light coloured and spotted trunks are impressive whether trees are planted singly, in avenues (meaning two rows of trees) or in boulevards (four rows of trees). They often get to an impressive 30–45 metres in height. Old trees can get over 60m. During profuse flowering, anthers (the pollen-bearing part of the stamen) shed from a single tree can cover the ground, paths, homes, roads and vehicles in a white snow-like frosting.

In nature, the [spotted gum and close relatives](#), the lemon scented gum (*C. citriodora*) and large leafed spotted gum (*C. henryii*) grow along the east coast of Australia, from far eastern Victoria to southern Queensland. In New South Wales forests, you might be lucky enough to spot the pairing of spotted gums and [native cycads](#) (*Macrozamia*), ancient plants resembling palms.

Every few years, spotted gums flower profusely.

Spotted gums are quick growing and hardy, if a little frost-sensitive when young. They can tolerate periods of waterlogged soil. [These traits](#) make the species well suited to urban use, where disturbed and low-oxygen soils are common due to paving, compaction and waterlogging. Urban trees have to be able to establish quickly and with relatively little care. They need to cope with environmental stresses and very poor quality urban soils. They need tall straight trunks so people and vehicles can pass under them, and so our cities keep their clear sight lines.

But we also want street trees to have broad, spreading canopies with a dense green foliage, to give shade, privacy and beauty.

As you can see, it's a tough set of requirements. The spotted gum meets all of these. In fact, it has the potential to be one of the great urban tree species, not just in Australia but internationally.

Resilient trees for the future climate

Spotted gums are tough. On urban streets in many parts of Australia, they will endure as the climate changes – possibly for decades or even centuries. They possess both lignotubers, the protective swelling at the base of the trunk, and epicormic buds, which lie dormant under the bark in readiness for fire and other stresses. These let the trees cope well with the abuses urban life can throw at them. Horticulturalists have been working to make the tree even better suited to urban use. Careful selection has created spotted gum varieties geared towards dense, spreading canopies and with reduced risk of dropping branches.

But not all spotted gums you see are like this. These varieties were uncommon or didn't exist 50 years ago, which means old urban trees might be more likely to shed limbs or have less attractive forms. These trees are survivors. Near Batemans Bay in New South Wales lives Old Blotchy, the [oldest known](#) spotted gum. It's estimated to be 500 years old. Some urban trees are already [150 years old](#) and in fine condition. Planting good quality spotted gums in a good position is a way to leave a lasting legacy.

As climate change intensifies, city planners are looking for resilient street trees able to provide cooling shade in a hotter climate. They could do a lot worse than choosing *C. maculata*.

6.

PHOTO GALLERY

Some of our members will remember Annie Treasure. Here is a photo taken in her garden of an Isopogon.



And below is a great photo of a gang gang cockatoo taken by Mandy on Mt William in the Grampians in October. It just sat there chomping away whilst Mandy was less than 2 metres away.



Gillian recently visited the Anglesea heathland with the Friends of Cranbourne Garden with her trusty camera:



Wahlenbergia stricta



Blunt Everlasting (*Argentipallium obtusifolium*)

7.



Dillwynia cinerascens (Grey parrot pea)

Some flowers from Ray and Eva's garden:

Darwinia hypericifolia



Darwinia macrostegia

Darwinia lejostyla



8.

Actinodium cunninghamii
(the daisy that's not a daisy)



Conospermum stoechadis
(Smoke bush)



Conostylis pauciflora

